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UNITED STATES
ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON 25, D.C.

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February 11, 1958

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Mr. Anthony T. Lausi
Director, Office of Territories
Department of the Interior
Washington 25, D.C.

Dear Mr. Lausi:

The Atomic Energy Commission, with the concurrence and support of the Department of Defense and with the approval of the President, will conduct a series of nuclear tests which will be known as Operation HARDTACK at the Eniwetok Proving Ground starting in April 1958 and continuing for approximately three to four months.

It therefore becomes necessary to reestablish a danger area surrounding the Atolls of Eniwetok and Bikini. After studying the test program, the test conditions, and the weather patterns normally expected during the period the test operation will be conducted, it has been decided to use a danger area like that which was used for Operation REDWING in 1956, except that both the east and west boundaries will be displaced two degrees, or approximately 120 nautical miles, to the west. This new danger area is described in the attached proposed Notice and Chart. We believe that this change will result in a shortened operation.

We are very much aware of our responsibilities for insuring the safety and well-being of the inhabitants of the Marshall Islands during these tests. We are again taking every feasible precaution to prevent exposure of these peoples to the hazards of our tests. The measures which were instituted during Operation REDWING and which proved so successful in safeguarding the Marshall Islands people will be augmented on the basis of the experience gained during that test series and the technical advances which have been made since that time. The network of weather observing stations providing information to Joint Task Force SEVEN has been increased and will lead to a significant improvement in the accuracy of the basic weather data used in the prediction of fallout patterns. Rad-safe stations will be operated at Rongelap Wotho, Ujelang and Utirik. The personnel at these stations will be ready to advise and assist,

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DATE: 10/28/01
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as well as warn, the inhabitants in the event of an emergency, in the same manner as during REDWING. A noteworthy advance in technique has been the installation of an IBM 704 computing machine at Eniwetok which will be used to speed up the computation of weather forecasts and fallout patterns.

Of special interest to the Rongelap people, who were returned to their home island through the joint efforts of the Department of Interior, the Department of Defense and the Atomic Energy Commission last June is the stationing of a Public Health Service medical officer on Rongelap full time during the HARDTACK operational period. Another interesting sidelight is that a recent study by Joint Task Force SEVEN shows that, if required, the operational forces could complete the evacuation of a threatened Atoll before hazardous fallout would occur. Of course, we do not expect that such a drastic measure would ever be required in view of the constant improvement in our techniques, but we are not neglecting any possibilities.

In the very near future we will make a public announcement of the establishment of the danger area. We request that until that release you handle the danger area notice as Confidential matter.

If you have any questions concerning these matters please feel free to call upon me.

Sincerely yours,

Alfred D. Starbird
Brigadier General, USA
Director of Military Application

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